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TEAM. Jimmy needles Director Capra after a tough camera session

Stewart's Story

(See Front Cover)

BY NORD RILEY

Jimmy's back in Hollywood. Here's what happens when the winner of an Academy Award returns from a war . .

AFTER time out (four-and-a-half years) for war, James Maitland Stewart, the gaunt, far-flung gentleman from Indiana, Pa. and Hollywood, Calif., has made a motion picture called "It's a Wonderful Life."

If the picture is as good as it promises to be, he will surely point out that Frank Capra, who directed it, is a genius. If it flops, Jimmy, whose critical vocabulary has been considerably enlarged in the Army, will blame himself in choice, pungent, front-line phrases.

Stewart is still a man with no palpable conceit and a homey, boyish demeanor. He has suffered few alterations in the service. Minor changes are a few gray hairs and a tendency to bellow — an occupational affliction that's likely to recur in all newly separated officers.

He Scared Riskin

HE WEIGHS 148 pounds, exactly what he scaled when he went in, and the weight is stretched as thin as ever over his six-foot-three frame. His green-gray eyes show a trace of weariness. He is 38 years old, a deliberate, slow-talking man with a habit of eyeing his listener thoughtfully before speaking. His speech is direct, and so naked of Hollywood hyperbole as to unnerve the long-term natives.

He gave Robert Riskin, who wrote and directed "Magic City" (next on the Stewart list), quite a scare.

"When I asked him how he liked the script," said Riskin, "he answered, 'I like it.' Now when anybody in this business tells me

that I figure it's either a trick or he thinks it stinks. He didn't even say it was terrific. So I waited for him to lower the boom on me. He didn't say anything. So I said, 'Great story for you, Jimmy!' He mumbled, 'Yeah, guess so,' and left. He liked it and told me so, but it took me a long time to understand that he wasn't going to sue me."

As this story may indicate, the Hollywood Jimmy has returned to hasn't changed much either in his absence.

Civilian Headaches

LIKE every returning veteran he has his problems as a civilian. They are not too serious. He had to hole in with the Henry Fondas for three months before he could move back into his own house in Brentwood. Then he bought a second-hand car, a medium-priced machine of interesting eccentricity. He speaks of it without love but with something like respect. "Kind of strange car. Explodes a good deal."

His major anxiety is to resume acting where he left off, which — and that's what scares him — was right at the top. He won the Academy Award for the best male performance in 1940. And when he enlisted, in 1941, he was at the height of his glory. His following was tremendous, and of both sexes. He created the Stewart type, a cross between Van Johnson and Gary Cooper, wholesome, lovable and rough-cut. In females he roused a powerful maternalism, and males recognized that he didn't need mothering; he was a good guy who could take care of himself.

His war record was distinguished, and anonymous. He gave no interviews while he was in the Army, made no pictures, and tended to his bombing with a zeal that startled his superiors and the men under him alike. He flew 20 combat missions over Europe, at times commanding as many as